

Nūh
عليه السلام



Then & Now

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by

Shaykh A. Nooruddeen Durkee

ذُرِّيَّتَهُ مِنْ حَمَلِنَا مَعَ نُوحٍ إِنَّهُ كَانَ عَبْدًا شَكُورًا

dhurriyyata man ḥamalnā ma‘a nuḥin ‘innahu kāna ‘abdan shakūrā

“Oh You the seed of those whom We bore (in the Ark) with Nūḥ,
He was indeed a grateful servant (of Ours).”

(Sūratu-l-Isrā‘ 17:3)



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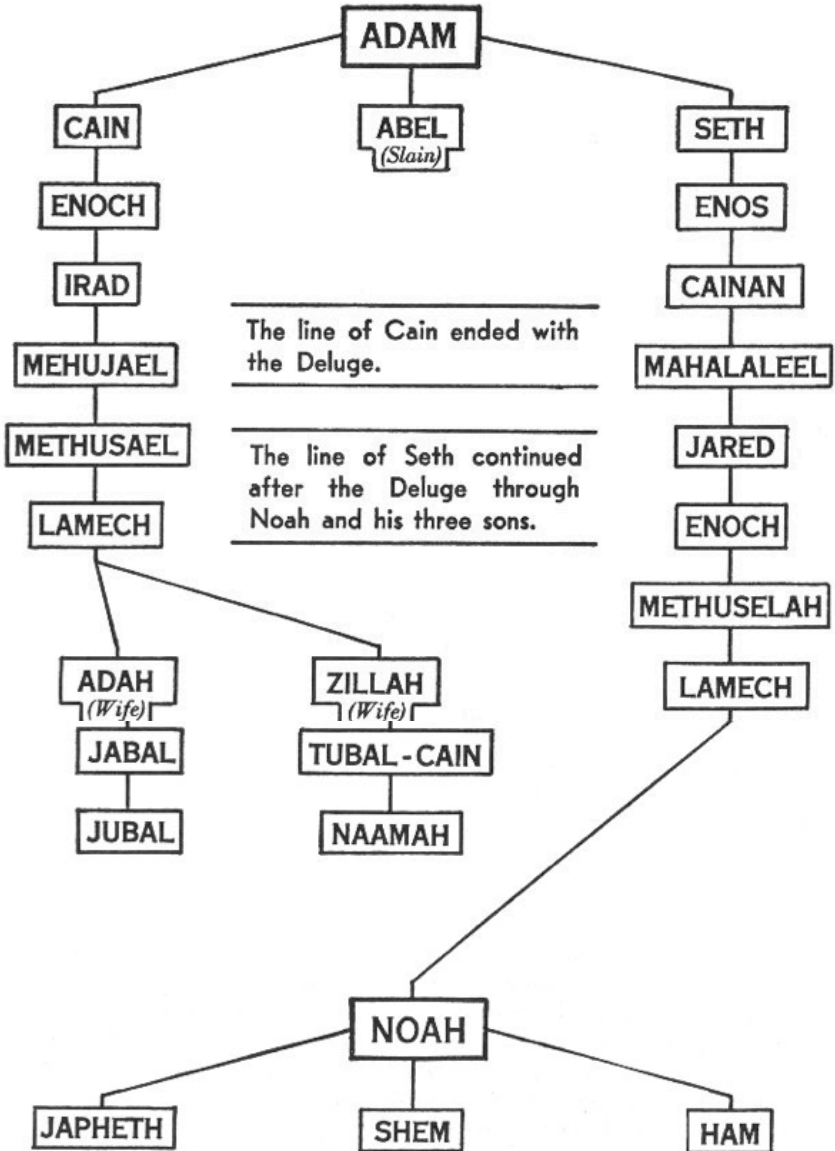


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°Adam and Hawā° had only one single son: Seth (Hebrew: שֵׁט, Arabic: شِيث Shīth meaning; “Placed; appointed”), the rest were all twins who intermarried. The spark that allowed the humans to return to the heavenly realm traveled in the line of Shīth ^{عليه} who was the inheritor or executor (*wasī* or *wāsia*^c/وص / واسع) of °Adam ^{عليه}.



1. ʾĀdam ؑ, lived 930 years and died 216 years before the birth of Nūḥ ؑ.
2. Shīth ؑ is ʾĀdam's ؑ only singular son (all the rest of his children were twins), and lived 912 years and knew Nūḥ ؑ for 34 years before he died
3. Methuselah or Ṣāliḥ ؑ (صالح); meaning Pious, is the 4th great grandson of Shīth ؑ and lived 969 years and knew ʾĀdam ؑ 243 years and knew Shīth ؑ 355 years. The year that Ṣāliḥ ؑ died, the flood came.
3. Lemeḥ or Lāma° (لامع) (son of Methuselah or Ṣāliḥ), lived 777 years (died before his father). He is the father of Nūḥ ؑ and died 5 years before the flood.
4. Nūḥ ؑ lived 950 years. Methuselah/Ṣāliḥ ؑ knew Nūḥ ؑ for 600 years and died the year of the flood. He talked with his father, Lemech, Lāma°, 595 years.
5. Shām or Sām (Hebrew: שם, Arabic: سام) was the believing son of Nūḥ ؑ (and father of all Semites), lived 600 years and talked with Methuselah/Ṣāliḥ ؑ 98 years. He lived after the flood 502 years.
6. The prophet Hūd ؑ (هود), also called Abīr, Eber or Heber (great-grandson of Shām/Sām and father of the Hebrews), lived 464 years and knew both Nūḥ ؑ and Sām.
7. Terah, in the Qurʾān is called Azar (Surah 6.74), (he is the great grandson 3 times removed of Eber or Hūd ؑ), lived 205 years. He was 130 years old when ʾIbrāhīm (إبراهيم) was born and talked both with Nūḥ ؑ and with Shām/Sām.
8. ʾIbrāhīm ؑ (originally Abrām son of Terah) lived 175 years. ʾIbrāhīm ؑ knew Shām/Sām son of Noah for 150 years. Nūḥ ؑ died 2 years before ʾIbrāhīm ؑ was born. Hūd ؑ outlived ʾIbrāhīm ؑ by 4 years

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dhurriyyata man ḥamalnā ma°a nuḥīn °innahu kāna °abdan ṣhakūrā

“The seed of those whom We bore (in the Ark) with Nūḥ,
He was indeed a grateful servant (of Ours).”

(Sūratu-l-Isrā° 17:3)

Islamic literature recounts that in the Generations of °Ādam, the majority of men and women continued to follow the original teachings of °Ādam, worshiping only Allāh alone and remaining true to the teachings. Among his descendants there were many truly and deeply pious believers who were greatly loved and esteemed by their communities. Exegesis goes on to narrate that, upon the death of these elders, people felt enormous grief and some felt prompted to make statues of these people in remembrance of them. Gradually after many generations many forgot the origin of the statues and began to worship them. In order to guide the people back to the Truth, Allāh raised up Nūḥ, who began preaching to his people both verbally and by example, and both inwardly (*bāṭin*) and outwardly (*dhāhir*) or secretly and openly though they continually rejected his teaching, as Allāh has him say,

قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي دَعَوْتُ قَوْمِي لَيْلًا وَنَهَارًا

°innī da°awtu qawmī laylan wa nahārā

“Surely I have called my people by night and by day.”

(Sūrah Nūḥ 71:5)

Allāh describes that Nūḥ began his mission in response to the call from Allāh, (meaning in English) “Warn your people before there comes to them a painful torment.” He (Nūḥ) said to them, “Oh my people, you should worship only Allāh. Be dutiful to Him, and obey me, and he told them,

بَاقُوا مَآئِي لَكُمْ نَذِيرٌ مُبِينٌ

yā qawmī °innī lakum nadhīrun mubīn

“O my people! Verily, I am but a plain warner to you.”

(Sūrah Nūḥ 71:1)

He then went on to tell his people that Allāh would forgive them for their mistakes of idolotary and would give them respite but only for an appointed term, for when the time limit of Allāh came, and it could not be delayed, if they only knew, He would destroy them.

Allāh ﷻ goes on to tell that after suffering hardships and troubles in the way of preaching his mission for ages, Nūḥ ؑ finally reports to his Lord that although he had been trying to bring them to the right path his people had opposed him generation after generation.

After this, the final report of Nūḥ ؑ has been recorded in 71:21-24, in which he tells Allāh ﷻ, “These people have rejected my call: they are blindly following their leaders who have devised a tremendous plot of deceit and cunning. Time now has come when these people should be deprived of every grace to accept guidance.”

This was not an expression of impatience by Nūḥ ؑ, but, after having preached his message under extremely trying circumstances for centuries he ؑ had become utterly disappointed with his people and had come to the opinion that no chance whatever was left of their ever coming to the straight path.

He praised Allāh ﷻ consistently and urged his people to do the same, warning them of the ultimate punishment they would face if they did not mend their ignorant ways repeatedly telling them.

بَاقُوا عِبَادُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنَ الدِّينِ إِذْنِي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ

yā qawmi ʿbudu-llāha ma lakum min ʿilāhin gbayruhu
ʿinnī akḥafu ʿalaykum ʿadḥaba yawmin ʿadḥīm

“O my people! Worship Allāh! You have no other god but He.
I fear for you the punishment of a dreadful day!”

(Sūratu-l-ʿArāf 7:59)

Early on, a few were moved by his words but the powerful and wealthy members of the tribe refused altogether to hear his call. The unbelievers at the time were impelled to rebel by various evil motives. Firstly, they were extremely envious and jealous of men superior to them in any way. Secondly, the people were ignorant of the weak and lowly, who were frequently superior intellectually, morally and spiritually. As a result of their ignorance, they were arrogant and mocked all who they felt were inferior to them. When Nūḥ ؑ called them to Allāh ﷻ they reviled him, abused the message and called the whole warning a lie. He then went on to explain the Message in greater depth, ensuring them that it was not a message of destruction but it was a message of mercy from Allāh ﷻ, but that their acts would inevitably lead to their destruction if they did not submit and accept the Truth, making clear he asked no reward from them, telling them his only reward was from Allāh ﷻ.

But the chiefs continued to hinder Nūḥ ۞ in his mission by instigating doubts about Nūḥ ۞. They would say to the other people:

فَقَالَ الْمَلَأُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ قَوْمِهِ مَا هَذَا إِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِثْلُكُمْ يُرِيدُ أَنْ يَتَفَضَّلَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَأَنْزَلَ مَلَائِكَةً مَّا سَمِعْنَا بِهَذَا فِي آبَائِنَا الْأَوَّلِينَ

fa qala-l-mala'u-l-ladhīna kafarū min qawmihi ma hadhā
°illa basharun mithlukum yurīdu °an yatafaḍḍala °alaykum
wa low shā'allāhu la'añzala malā'ikatam-
mā sami°na bi-hadhā fī °abā°ina-l-°awwalīn

“He is no more than a man like yourselves.

His wish is to assert superiority over you.

If Allāh had wished He could have sent down Angels.

We never heard such a thing from among our ancestors of old.”

(Sūratu-l-Mu°minūn 23:24)

The chiefs would then turn in anger towards Nūḥ ۞ and challenge him insistently and arrogantly:

قَالُوا أَبَانُوحُ قَدْ جَادَلْتَنَا فَكُنتَ جِدَالِنَا فَامْنَحْ جَدَالَنَا فَتَنَّا بِمَا تَعِدُنَا إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ
qālū yā nūḥu qad jādaltana fa-°akḥarta jidālanā
fa°tinā bimā ta°idunā in kuñta mina-ṣ-ṣādiqīn

They said, “Oh Nūḥ! Indeed you have disputed with us
and you have prolonged the dispute:

now bring upon us what you have threatened us with,
if you are of the Truthful Ones.”

(Sūrah Hūd 11:32)

Nūḥ ۞ would then remind them that it was not in his hands but in the Power of Allāh ۞ to punish them for their evil ways.

قَالَ إِنَّمَا يَأْتِيكُمْ بِهِ اللَّهُ إِنْ شَاءَ وَمَا أَنَا بِمُعْجِزٍ
qālā °innamā ya°tikum bihi-llāhu °in shā°
wa mā °añtum bi-mu°jizīn

He said, “Truly Allāh will bring it on you if He wills –
and then, you will not be able to frustrate it.”

(Sūrah Hūd 11:33)

But all his warnings, his good advice and counsel continued to fall on deaf ears – indeed every generation was worse than the previous.

Except for a very few who had followed his guidance, most people continued to worship the idols who were only their ancestors carved in stone with different names as attested in the following verse:

وَقَالُوا لَا تَذَرُنَّ آلِهَتَكُمْ وَلَا تَذَرُنَّ وَدًّا وَلَا سُوَاعًا وَلَا يَغُوثَ وَيَعُوقَ وَنَسْرًا

wa qālū lā tadḥarunna °āālihatakum
wa lā tadḥarunna waddan wa lā suwā°an
wa lā yaghūṭha wa ya°ūqa wa nasrā

“And they have said (to each other)

‘Do not abandon your gods:

abandon neither Wadd nor Suwā°, nor Yaguth nor Ya°uq, nor Nasr.”

(Sūrah Nūḥ 71:23)

Nūḥ ۞ re-doubled his efforts but all to no avail crying out,

قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي دَعَوْتُ قَوْمِي لَيْلًا وَنَهَارًا

°innī da°awtu qawmī laylan wa nahārā

“Surely I have called my people by night and by day.”

(Sūrah Nūḥ 71:5)

continuing, “But my call only (increases their) flight (from the True Path). Every time I have called to them, that You may forgive them, they have thrust their fingers into their ears, covered themselves up with their garments, grown obstinate and given themselves up to arrogance. So, I have called to them aloud: further I have spoken to them in public and secretly in private.” (Sūrah Nūḥ 71:6-9)

As time passed, Nūḥ ۞ became ever firmer in his call. When the unbelievers began insulting those, mainly from the poor, who accepted the message, believing that Nūḥ ۞ would in turn send those faithful away to attract the wealthy unbelievers, Nūḥ ۞ revealed that it was they – the arrogant and ignorant rich – who were the wicked and sinful ones. The people then accused him of being a fortune teller or a magician. Nūḥ ۞ declared that he was by no means a fortune-teller, pretending to reveal secrets which are not worth revealing and also denied accusations claiming he was an angel, continuing to maintain that he was but a human messenger.

When the people refused to acknowledge in any way their faults, Nūḥ ۞ told them that it was not he, but that it was Allāh ۞ that would inevitably punish them — however He pleased and chose.

Nūḥ ۞ told Allāh ۞ that he had conveyed the message both in public places and with individuals in private and had told the people the rewards they would receive if they became righteous, namely that Allāh ۞ would supply plentiful rain as a blessing, and that Allāh ۞ would also guarantee them an increase in sons and wealth.

Finally one day, Nūḥ ۞ received a direct revelation from Allāh ﷻ, in which he was told that no one new would believe the message now aside from those who had already submitted to Allāh ﷻ.

The frustration of Nūḥ ۞ at the defiance of his people finally led him to ask Allāh ﷻ not to leave even one sinner upon earth.

وَقَالَ نُوحٌ رَبِّ لَا تَذَرْنِي عَلَى الْأَرْضِ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ دَبَّارًا

wa gala nūḥun rabbi lā tadḥar °ala-l-°arḍi mina-l-kā°rīna dayyārā

And Nūḥ said, “Lord, do not leave a single disbeliever on earth!”

(Sūrah Nūḥ 71:26)



Thereupon, Allāh ﷻ decreed that a terrible flood would cover the earth and He ordered Nūḥ ۞ to build an Ark which would save him and the believers from this dreadful calamity.

This led to further derision among his people as Nūḥ ۞, ever obedient to the instructions of Allāh ﷻ, went out in search of material with which to build a ship in a land-locked valley.

Some Muslim exegetes relate that, in the land where Nūḥ ۞ lived, vegetation was scarce and so he had to plant trees and wait for them to grow before beginning work on the Ark. When Nūḥ ۞ began building the ship called the Ark, the people who saw him at work laughed at him even more than before. Their conclusion was that he was surely a madman – they could not find any other reason why a man would build a huge boat where no sea or river was nearby. Although Nūḥ ۞ was now very old, the aged patriarch continued to work tirelessly until the Ark was finished.

فَاَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْهِ أَنْ اصْنَعْ الْفُلْكَ بِأَعْيُنِنَا وَوَحَيْنَا
فَإِذَا جَاءَ أَمْرُنَا وَفَارَ التَّنْوِيرُ فَاسْلِكْ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ زَوْجَيْنِ اثْنَيْنِ
وَأَهْلَكَ إِلَّا مَنْ سَبَقَ عَلَيْهِ الْقَوْلُ مِنْهُمْ وَلَا تَخَاطِبْنِي فِي الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا إِنَّهُمْ مُخْرَجُونَ

fa°awḥaynā °ilayhi °āni °iṣna°i-l-fulka bi-°a°yuninā wa waḥyina

fa°idḥā jā°ā°ā° amrunā wa fāra -t-tannūru

fa°s-luk fihā min kullin zawjayni ithnayni

wa ahlaka °illā man sabaqa °alayhi-l-qawlu minhum

wa lā tukḥātibnī °-l-ladḥīna ḍḥalamū °innahum muḡḥraqūn

“Construct the Ark within Our sight and under Our guidance.

Then when Our command comes,

Nūh° ﷺ

and the fountains of the earth gush forth,
take on board pairs of every kind, male and female, and your people
except those against whom the Word has already been issued:
and do not beseech Me on behalf of those who are unjust;
for surely they shall be drowned (in the flood).” —

(Sūratu-l-Mu°minūn 23:27)

The flood waters began to rise. Believers who had so far suffered at the hands of the chiefs and idol worshippers found themselves safe on the Ark. They offered their prayers and prostrations to Allāh ﷻ as thanksgiving for the Mercy He had granted them. The unbelievers who had ignored the guidance of Allāh ﷻ were in a grievous state. The heavy downpour of rain, the strong winds, the deafening thunder and the blinding lightning created confusion in their minds and fear in their hearts. They ran in every direction in search for safety. They climbed the roof-tops and the trees but nothing could save them now as the waters rose higher and higher. All was lost.

The Ark with all aboard was sailing safely on the waters and when Nūh ﷺ saw amongst the unbelievers one of his sons who was desperately trying to save himself from the flood, Nūh ﷺ called out:

وَهِيَ تَجْرِي بِهَيْمَةٍ فِي مَوْجٍ كَالْجِبَالِ
وَنَادَى نُوحٌ ابْنَهُ وَكَانَ فِي مَعْزِلٍ يَا بُنَيَّ ارْكَبْ مَعَنَا وَلَا تَكُنْ مَعَ الْكَافِرِينَ •
قَالَ سَآوِي إِلَى جَبَلٍ يَعْصِمُنِي مِنَ الْمَاءِ قَالَ لَا عَاصِرَ الْيَوْمَ مِنْ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ إِلَّا مَنْ رَحِمَهُ
وَحَالٌ بَيْنَهُمَا الْمَوْجُ فَكَانَ مِنَ الْمَغْرُوبِينَ

wa hiya tajrī bi-him fī mawjīn ka-l-jibālī
wa nāda nūhunu ibnahu wa kāna fī ma°zilin
yā bunayya °irkab ma°anā wa lā takun ma°a-l-kāfirīn •
qāla saāwī °ilā jabalin ya°šimunī mina-l-maḥī
qala lā °āšima-l-yawma min °amri-llahi °illā man raḥima
wa ḥāla baynahuma-l-mawju fakāna mina-l-mughḥraqīn

‘O my son! embark with us and be not with the unbelievers’.

The son replied: ‘I will betake myself to some mountain,
it will save me from the flood’.

Nūh said: ‘Today nothing can save you from what Allāh has decreed,
for only those on whom He has Mercy will be saved’.

And the waves came between them
and the son was among the drowned ones.”

(Sūrah Hūd 11:42-43)

Nūḥ°

Allāh ﷻ commanded:

وَقِيلَ يَا أَرْضُ ابْلَعِي مَاءَكِ وَيَا سَمَاءُ أَقْلِعِي وَغِيضَ الْمَاءُ
وَقُضِيَ الْأَمْرُ وَاسْتَوَتْ عَلَى الْجُودِيِّ
وَقِيلَ بُعِدَ الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ

wa qīla yā arḍu °ibla°i mā°aki wa yā samā°u

°aqli°i wa ghīda-l-mā°u

wa quḍiya-l-amru wa-stawat °ala-l-jūdiyyi

wa qīla bu°dan li-l-qawmi-ḍh-ḍhalimīn

A voice cried out, Earth, swallow up your waters.

Oh sky, cease your rain.

The waters receded. —The command was fulfilled.

The Ark came to rest on Mount Judi.

It was said, Away with the wrong-doing people.

(Sūrah Hūd 11:44)



Unlike the story found in the Bible, Allāh ﷻ does not specifically say in the Qur’ān that the entire world was submerged in water. According to Muslim exegetes only certain parts of the world were submerged under water, one of them being the region of Nūḥ ﷺ and his people. Also the exegetes relate a differing story than Christian sources regarding the animals carried in the Ark. According to Muslim exegetes the Ark of Nūḥ ﷺ was a flat watercraft made of logs, tied together with ropes, the flood was local and the animals Allāh ﷻ alluded to were the domesticated animals of Nūḥ ﷺ.

There is much speculation from many quarters about the nature of the ship, its size, how many animals were on board, etc. The scholar, ar-Razī says, “Know that I do not like going into these details because there is really no need of benefit in knowing them. Shaykh Muḥammad al-Jamal, writing about this, says, “No one knows the reality of this ship and we should not speculate concerning the details, but, rather, we should concern ourselves with the *meaning* of the story and its morals and its deeper implications.

In the context of meaning I would like to remind the reader of the saying of Abu Dharr (أبو ذر الغفاري) ؓ who, while holding on to the door of the Ka°bah, said that once he had heard the Prophet ﷺ say, “My family among you are like the Ark of Nūḥ ﷺ. Who sails on it will be safe, but who holds back from it will perish.” (Ahmad)



Now, bearing all of this in mind and, given that we have in these first few pages simply related the basic common received, mainly ʿIslāmic, narrative of the story of Nūḥ ۞ with Qurʾānic sources noted, I would like to concentrate in the time that is left on other dimensions of what is a well-known story with reference to current affairs especially in the light of looming world climate change.

First of all I would say that it is instructive that the response of the rich and those in power to climate change is roughly cognate with the way that Nūḥ's ۞ message was received by the notables and chiefs of his time.

وَيَضَعُ الْفُلْكَ وَكُلَّمَا مَرَّ عَلَيْنَا مَلَأَ مِنْ قَوْمِهِ سَخِرُوا مِنْهُ
قَالَ إِنْ تَسْخَرُوا مِنَّا فَإِنَّا نَسْخَرُ مِنْكُمْ كَمَا تَسْخَرُونَ

wa yaṣnaʿu-l-fulka wa kullamā marra ʿalayhi malaʾum-min qawmihi
sakhīrū minhu qāla ʾin taskharū minnā
fa-ʾinna naskharu minkum kamā taskharūn

As he was building the ark,
whenever the chiefs of his people passed by him,
they would ridicule him.

He said, 'If you ridicule us [today],
we shall ridicule you [tomorrow] just as you ridicule us [now].'

(Sūrah Hūd 11:38)



A scientific consensus on climate change exists, as recognized by national academies of science and other authoritative bodies. The conclusions are that the average temperature of Earth's atmosphere and oceans have risen since the late 19th century and this rise is projected to continue. Since the early 20th century, Earth's average surface temperature has increased by about 0.8 °C (1.4 °F), with about two thirds of the increase occurring since 1980. Warming of the climate system is unequivocal, and scientists are more than 90% certain that most of it is caused by increasing concentrations of greenhouse gases produced by human activities such as deforestation and the burning of fossil fuels.

Despite objections from some individual scientists, studies such as surveys of climatologists and reviews of abstracts from scientific journals have found little controversy over these conclusions within the scientific community.

Nevertheless 59% of Americans believe there is “significant disagreement” among scientists on the issue. The opinion gap between scientists and the public in 2009 stands at 84% to 49% that global temperatures are increasing because of human-activity.

Some of the most determined opponents of action on climate change in the U.S. are those motivated by an ideological commitment to minimal government and "free market" laissez-faire capitalism. Their efforts on behalf of unregulated corporate wealth and individual power have been funded heavily by patrons in the fossil fuel industry. While ExxonMobil has drawn much attention for its patronage of global warming denialist activity by such groups, much less public attention has been paid to the activities of the multibillionaire brothers, Charles and David Koch, owners of Koch Industries. Koch Industries is the second largest private company in the U.S., with estimated 2008 revenues of \$100 billion. Started originally as a petroleum business, Koch Industries has, with time, become a diversified enterprise that funds large-scale lobbying and a range of activist groups that play a significant role in the global warming denial machine.



If these are not the chiefs and notables of present day society, the 1% as opposed to the 99%, who are, and these are just the chiefs and notables in the United States, a country, by the way, that accounts for only 5% of the global population whilst consuming 28% of the world resources on the back of the military-industrial-scientific/educational complex that, with its massive spending budget, now accounts for just under half of the world's military spending at 41% of the world total which is more than the 15 next countries with the highest spending who all together account for over 81% of the world total.

What this means is that if you have only 5% of the world's population and you want to consume over 25% of the world's resources you have to have a military machine willing to kill or enslave other human beings to get what you want.

And the 15 other countries including Russia, China, the UK, France, Australia, Canada, India etc., albeit on a smaller scale, all involved in carrying out similar policies as can be seen, for instance, in the Indian policies undertaken against the poor indigenous people of Karnataka, Chhattisgarh, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal not to mention Kashmir.

Policies aimed at extacting the mineral wealth of those areas – policies no different than those carried out by the United States in the Middle East and West Africa in its relentless pursuit of oil, or by, China in Central Africa or Russia in Central Asia in pursuit of other natural resources at the expense of indigenous peoples on behalf of the 15+ more wealthy industrialised countries.

This may hardly seem cognate at first hearing with the situation that prevailed between Nūḥ ۞ and the chiefs and notables of his time in that his message was a more spiritual or religious one, but the, mainly secular scientists and their supporters, none the less, are trying to draw the attention of the various governments and their “notables and chiefs” to a world wide problem that, no less than the flood of Nūḥ ۞, is likely to affect the majority of the world’s poulation with climate change, desertification, flood and famine on a very wide scale having profound implications for all of our futures.

In this context Allāh ﷻ speaks about the “Dīni-l-Ḥaqq”, in, perhaps, contradistinction to the Dīnu-l-ʿIslām,

هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَىٰ وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ
لِيُظْهِرَ عَلَى الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ وَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا

huwa-l-ladhī ʿarsala rasūlahu bi-l-ḥudā wa dīni-l-ḥaqqi
li-yuḍḥhirahu ʿala-d-dini kullihi wa kafa bi-llāhi shahidā

It is He Who has sent His Messenger with Guidance
and the Religion of Truth,

(dīni-l-ḥaqq / دِينِ الْحَقِّ)

to proclaim it over all religion:

and enough is Allah for a Witness.

(Sūratu-l-Faṭḥ 48:27)

We may be surprised how this Message will be spread to the people.

It is said that when al-Mahdi ۞ comes with this Dīni-l-Ḥaqq many Muslims will not believe him and indeed will reject him. The traditions state that al-Mahdi ۞ needs 313 followers who are not only sincere and faithful, but also possess knowledge and wisdom. He ۞ will also have need of another 40,000 faithful followers who will fill the secondary positions needed to spread the message. For this reason is up to *us* to educate our communities; first starting with ourselves in order to purify our hearts, avoid sin and to acquire more knowledge and wisdom, and then thru concentration on our schools, communities and our countries to the extent of our abilities.

It is important to understand that al-Mahdi ° will manifest as soon as people are ready for him even though people throughout history are never really ready as they killed their prophets, and the poor sincere teachers who followed them one after another. However Allāh ° continued to send Prophets ° until He finally sent the Prophet Muḥammad ° who brought the last message at the time when humanity reached a certain level of spiritual maturity and religious sophistication (listen to my talks on the flat world vs. the spherical world and the importance of the spiral of time), and thus Allāh ° provided them with the most complete and final religion.

اليوم أكملت لكم دينكم وأتممت عليكم نعمتي
ورضيت لكم الإسلام ديناً °

al-yawma °akmaltu lakum dīnakum wa °atmamtu °alaykum ni°matī
wa raḍitu lakumu-l-°islama dīnnañ

“This day have I perfected your religion for you,
completed My favor upon you,
and have chosen for you °Islām as your religion.”

(Sūratu-l-Ma°ida 5:3)

After that there was no need to send a new message, for the Nubuwwa (نبوة) or Waḥīy (وحي) or Revelation was complete and fulfilled. However as the door of the Nubuwwa closed a new door opened which was the door of Walaya (ولاية) which was necessary for the explanation of the Message contained in the Qur°ān in order that people might understand not only what it meant but how it was to be applied beginning with the Sunnah of the Prophet °.

In as much as the Prophet Mūḥammad ° terminated the cycle of prophecy (*nubūwa*/نبوة) at the same time he opened the cycle of initiation (*walāyah*/ولاية) or spiritual authority.

For this reason Guides and Teachers were appointed beginning with Sayidina °Alī ° and then those who, generation after generation, took from him preserved and explained the message for people.

انا مدينة العلم وعلي بابها. لا أحد يدخل البيت إلا من خلال البوابة
°ana madīnatu-l-°ilm wa °alī bābuhā:

lā °aḥadaḍ yudkḥila-l-bayt °illā min khilālū-l-bawābah

I am the city of knowledge and °Alī is its gate.

One does not enter the house except through its gate:

(at-Tirmidhī and al-Ḥakīm)

Nūḥ °

عن النبي صلى الله عليه وآله وصحبه وسلم, قال: من كنت مولاه فعلي مولاه

qāla an-nabī, ṣalallahu °alayhi wa salam:
man kanat mawlahi fa-°alī mawlahu

The Messenger ﷺ said

“Whose Mawla I am °Alī is his Mawla”

(at-Tirmidhī and Nasā’ī narrated the tradition

and it is supported by numerous chains of transmission.)

(Albānī says in *Silsilatu-l-aḥādīthi-ṣ-ṣaḥīḥah* (4:331 #1750)

“its chain of authorities is *ṣaḥīḥ* according to the conditions of Bukḥārī & Muslim”



Mawlā is an Arabic word (مولى) which has two meanings. In Islamic literature it is prominently used with the meaning of “protector” as well as “Master”. Historically, the word *mawlā* has been interpreted to mean either master, protector or supporter; walī, wilāyah, °awliyā° are its supporting synonyms. A *mawlā* usually means the one who has more authority over believers than they have on themselves. It can also mean a much more elevated person, a “master”, “lord”, or “guardian”. (n.b. also the word: *mawlanā*, meaning “our lord” or “our master”) “*Walī*” (ولي) is a word which empowers or gives authority/guardianship to a person, community, or country that is under the direction and rules on behalf of another.

A “*Walī*” (ولي) therefore is someone who has “*Walayah*” (authority or guardianship/ولاية) over somebody else. For example, in fiqh, a father is the walī of his children. The word *Walī* holds a special importance in Islamic spiritual life where it is used with various meanings which relate to its different functions, including: “next of kin, ally, friend, helper, guardian, patron or saint”. In °Islām, the phrase *walīyu-l-lāh* (ولي الله) can be used to denote one vested with the ‘authority of Allāh ﷻ’ or the ‘friend of Allāh ﷻ’.

In a ḥadīth from Zayd ibn °Arqām ؓ quoted in at-Ṭabarī : “It was a very hot morning when the Prophet ﷺ stopped at the pond of Ghadir on his way back from the Farewell Pilgrimage. He ﷺ ordered a platform to be built from camel saddles and after hearing the call for prayer, we gathered and he ﷺ gave a strong sermon.

He said: “Allāh has revealed to me: ‘Oh Messenger! Deliver what has been sent down to you from your Lord; and if you don’t do it, you will have not delivered His message.’ Jibrīl ؑ has informed me of my Lord’s command to stand up in this place and announce to all men, white and black that °Alī ibn Abi Ṭalīb is my brother, my vice-gerent, my successor and the leader (°Imām) after me.”

“I asked Jibrīl to ask my Lord for exemption knowing that there are only a few who are truly pious but there are many who molest and criticize me for being so close and dedicated to °Alī, calling me ‘one who believes everything he hears’ – Allāh ﷻ says about that: ‘And they say: He is one who believes everything that he hears; say: A hearer of good for you.’ If I wished I could name them and point them out, but I will be kind to them and won’t. Allāh ﷻ will not settle for less than the announcement of °Alī’s leadership. So, let it be known to you oh people that Allāh ﷻ has placed him as your *walī* and as an °Imām (leader) and made obeying him incumbent upon everyone; his ruling is effective and his word is decisive. Cursed shall be the ones who disobey him, and the mercy of Allāh ﷻ shall be upon the ones who are true to him. Listen and obey him.

“Allāh ﷻ knows everything and I taught him everything Allāh ﷻ taught me. So, hold on to him and do not reject him for by Allāh he is the one who guides to the right way and acts according to it.

“Allāh ﷻ will not forgive the one who rejects him and will definitely punish the one who rejects him with an awful punishment, for he is the best human after me as long as there is life on this earth. Cursed is the one who disobeys him. I am conveying to you what was definitely told me through Jibrīl ﷺ and ‘Let every soul consider what it has forwarded for the morrow’.

“He then lifted °Alī up until his legs were at the same level as the knee of the Prophet ﷺ and said: ‘Oh people, this is my brother, the retainer of my knowledge and my successor upon the believers and upon the interpretation of the Qur’ān. [In another narration: ‘Oh Allāh! Love those who love him, and be hostile to those who are hostile to him; curse those who renounce him; be against those who deny him his right.’]

“Iblis (Shayṭān) caused °Adam ﷺ to leave the Garden, despite him being the best, because of envy. So, do not envy him lest you make a mistake and your deeds become vain while you do not perceive the Truth.

“It is in regards to °Alī that Sūratu-l-°Asr was revealed. Oh people! Believe in Allāh and His Messenger, and in the Light which He sent down with him before We alter faces then turn them on their backs, or curse them as We cursed the violators of the Sabbath. The Light from Allāh is in me, then it is in °Alī, then it is in those who come after him down to al-Mahdi, the Qā°im.

“Oh people! There will be after me leaders inviting to the Fire; and on the Day of Judgment they shall find no help. Allāh ﷻ and I have nothing to do with them; they and their followers are in the lowest depths of the Fire. ‘At that time Allāh ﷻ shall settle your affairs; you two armies.’ ‘The flames of fire and smoke will be sent on you two, and then you will not be able to defend yourselves.’”



Perhaps the reader/listener may wonder why I have seemingly digressed into the subject of Walayat, the circumstances surrounding the sermon at al-Ghādir, and, ultimately, the leadership of ʿAlī ؑ.

Earlier on I made mention of this ḥadīth.

أَلَا أَنْ مِثْلَ أَهْلِ بَيْتِي فِيكُمْ مِثْلَ سَفِينَةِ نُوحٍ، مَنْ رَكِبَهَا نَجَا وَمَنْ تَخَلَّفَ عَنْهَا غَرِقَ
 “My family among you are like the Ark of Nūh ؑ. Who sails on it will be safe, but who holds back from it will perish.” (Ahmad)

After the Prophet ﷺ died the nascent Muslim community (ʿummah) took the decision that they would themselves chart the course of the community and through and by various means ‘elected’ or ‘declared’ first Abu Bakr ؓ, then ʿUmar ؓ and Uṭhmān ؓ to be the rightful or, perhaps, necessary, leaders of the community – a situation which lasted for some 23 years.

During this time ʿAlī ؑ served the ʿummah in many capacities, as attested by this saying of ʿUmar ؓ ,

لَوْ لَا عَلِيٌّ لَهْلَكَ عَمْرُ

“Were it not for ʿAlī, ʿUmar would have been doomed.”

and

لَا بَقِيَتْ لِمُعْضَلَةٍ لَيْسَ لَهَا أَبُو الْحَسَنِ

“May I not live for day in which a religious problems exists to which ʿAlī has not the answer.”

In the years after the death of the Prophet ﷺ, ʿAlī ؑ selflessly and actively worked for the community. People in general knew that ʿAlī ؑ was the man to seek, that he was the man to learn from, that he was the one with a clear answer to every problem. People knew that ʿAlī ؑ was not the Kḫalīfa, but that he was the ʿImām, as such the central religious and spiritual figure, so people actively sought his guidance like bees going after a flower and he ؑ, in turn, gave of his fountain of knowledge with unbounded generosity, and the more he gave the more people, from near and far, seemed to want.

°Alī ؑ was an encyclopedia of °Islām and it was this encyclopedia that people treasured most. The information and guidance was given always freely and for free, without cost and for the asking, and was highly appreciated by members of the community.

In, and over, time a *school* of learning, headed by Imām °Alī ؑ as the central figure, without bylaws or constitution, arose in Madinah, especially in the masjid, which represented a very important development in the Muslim °ummah, and one which is barely understood by the present day community, Sunni or Shi°ah.

And this is what I am concerned to clarify for the reader/listener so they might understand that not only did that “school” come into being in the historical past but that same “school” continues in operation to the present day.

This school began when °Alī ؑ began tutoring his children and those of his extended family and companions at home. Both al-Ḥasan ؑ and al-Ḥusayn ؑ, as well as Ibn Abbās ؓ were active participants, and so were other family members. °Alī ؑ taught them Qur°ān, its Tafsīr, and Ḥadīth, as well as the °aḥkāṃ which included the rules and regulations of the various aspects of °Islāmic duties, such as acts of worship, personal relationship, personal behavior, etc. The environment in his home buzzed with religious activity. His was widely regarded as being the best school of °Islām. As more people became aware of it, it in turn led to numerous group discussions (*ḥalakah* and *soḥbet*) being held which were popularly attended by many people, both neighbors and people who often came from a great distance to partake as they could and, very importantly, returned to their own communities with the teachings they received.

We, who are People of Taṣawwuf, believe that this school of °Alī ؑ is the origin of what is popularly know as Ṣūfism and that, in fact, this School extends in time through the hands of those known as Shuyukḥ, Murshids or Pirs – being the direct heirs of those who were trained by °Alī ؑ and sent out to teach the Truth (*ḥaqqiqah*).

Whilst what they teach is common to most °Islāmic teaching, there is also one subject which is not widely or commonly understood which is the preparation of the way for al-Mahdī (المهدي), The Rightly Guided one who was directly mentioned by the Prophet ﷺ.

“The world will not end until the Arabs are ruled by a man from my family whose name is the same as mine and whose father’s name is the same as my father’s.” (Sunan Abi Dawūd 11: 370)

The Messenger ﷺ also said: “The Mahdī is of my lineage, with a high forehead and a long, thin, curved nose. He will fill the earth with fairness and justice as it was filled with oppression and injustice, and he will rule for seven years. (Mustadrak al-Ḥākim, 4: 557-558 who said: “this is a hadīth whose ʾisnād is ṣaḥīḥ, although it was not reported by al-Bukḥari and Muslim. al-Dḥahabī agreed with him, and al-Albānī said: “This is a ṣaḥīḥ sanad, and its men are *thiqāt* (trustworthy), *Silsilat al-Aḥādīth as-Ṣaḥīḥah*,”)

Umm Salama ؓ said: “His (al-Mahdī's ﷺ) aim is to establish a system from which all superstitious faiths have been eliminated. In the same way that students enter ʾIslām, so unbelievers will come to believe. (Vizier Mustafa, Emergence of Islam, p. 171) and she said further, “When the Mahdī appears, Allāh will cause such power of vision and hearing to be manifested in believers that the Mahdī will call to the whole world from where he is, with no postman involved, and they will hear and even see him.” (*Muntakab al-Adḥḥar*, p. 483).

al-Mahdī ﷺ will also explain to the people of different religious systems the truth of their particular scripture and traditions. This is in direct reference to the meaning of the Dīnu-l-Ḥaqq referred to in:

وَدِّينَ الْحَقِّ يُظْهِرُ عَلَى الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ

wa dīni-l-ḥaqqi li-yudḥhirahu ʿala-d-dini kullihi
and the Religion of Truth will manifest over all religion:
(Sūratu-l-Faṭḥ 48:27)

Just as Jews are waiting for the Messiah, Christians are waiting for Jesus, and Muslims are waiting for both the Mahdī and Jesus. so too do Buddhists await Maitreya and the Hindoos are waiting for Kalki and the Zoroastrians are waiting for the appearance of Saoshyant. In our time they all differ but al-Mahdī ﷺ will explain to them the universal truth behind all their ways in keeping with Allāh ﷻ, saying

وَلِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَّسُولٌ

wa li-kulli ʾummatin rasūn
And for every Ummah (a community), there is a Messenger;
(Sūrah Yunus 10:47)

وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَّسُولًا

wa laqadā baʿathnāa fī kulli ʾummatin rasūlan
and We have raised up a Messenger from every Community.
(Sūratu-n-Naḥl 16:36)

So my point in speaking of all of this is try to make clear that the times we are living in are in many ways cognate to the time of Nūh ۞. A time when all types of ideologies have been tested and proven to be wanting. A time when people are beginning to understand that they do not have any more solutions in the bag. For instance, look at communism, which came into practice in Russia 100 years ago. Many people of the world at that time thought that this would be the way of life to guarantee the prosperity of all. But to their surprise, it totally failed from without – and from within. Some people still think that global mercantile capitalism may likewise solve their problems completely but this system is also about to crash, because the whole system is based on interest (*ribā*/ربا), which has led to the to the point that the people of the USA have the heaviest debt burden in the world. America is, in fact, bankrupt and it is only the need of the Chinese to maintain social stability that keeps them from calling in the debt of the Americans. Studies even show that in fact the people of the industrialised world will *never* be able to pay their debt in full as with Greece, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Ireland etc.

Or more to the point, perhaps, look at what is happening to the environment as a direct result of the greed of the few and the weakness of the many.

The Chinese are buying up huge tracts of land in central Africa, fencing it, putting in airstrips and flying out the food grown by indentured labor back to China, whilst at the same time in Africa, if current trends of soil degradation continue, the continent might only be able to feed just 25% of its population by 2025, according to UNU's Ghana-based Institute for Natural Resources in Africa.

In West Africa the Niger Delta covers 20,000 km² within wetlands of 70,000 km², formed primarily by sediment deposition. It is home to some 20 million people from 40 different ethnic groups. Its floodplain makes up 7.5% of Nigeria's total land mass and is the third-largest drainage basin in Africa. Its ecosystem contains one of the highest concentrations of biodiversity on the planet. In addition to supporting a vast range of flora and fauna, there is arable terrain that can sustain a wide variety of crops, tropical forests and more species of freshwater fish than any other ecosystem in West Africa

Unfortunately for the Niger Delta, oil was discovered in the region. Since drilling began in 1976 there has been a lack of concern by the Government or the oil operators to exert any control of the environmental problems and the environment has been degraded.

This region could experience a loss of 40% of its inhabitable terrain in the next thirty years as a result of extensive dam construction in the region. The carelessness of the oil industry has also precipitated a situation, which can perhaps be best encapsulated by a 1983 report issued by the NNPC, long before popular unrest surfaced:

“We witnessed the slow poisoning of the waters of this country and the destruction of vegetation and agricultural land by oil spills which occur during petroleum operations. But since the inception of the oil industry in Nigeria, more than twenty-five years ago, there has been no concerned and effective effort on the part of the government, let alone the oil operators, to control environmental problems associated with the industry.”

Oil spillage has a major impact on the ecosystem into which it is released and may constitute ecocide. Immense tracts of the mangrove forests, which are especially susceptible to oil (mainly because it is stored in the soil and re-released annually during inundations), have been destroyed. An estimated 5 to 10% of the Nigerian mangrove ecosystems have been wiped out either by settlement or oil. The rainforest which previously occupied some 7,400 km² of land has almost totally disappeared as well.

Spills in populated areas often spread out over a wide area, destroying crops and aquacultures through contamination of the groundwater and soils. The consumption of dissolved oxygen by bacteria feeding on the spilled hydrocarbons also contributes to the death of fish. In agricultural communities a year's supply of food can be destroyed at once. Because of the careless nature of oil operations in the Delta, the environment is growing increasingly uninhabitable.

The indigenes living in the affected areas complain about health issues including breathing problems and skin lesions; many have lost basic human rights such as health, access to food, clean water, and an ability to work.

Or take a look at the tar sands development in Alberta, Canada, “the largest and most environmentally destructive endeavor of all time,” which has already devastated an area the size of England and Wales.

Or Hungary where a recent wave of red toxic sludge – a mixture of water and mining waste containing heavy metals – burst from a reservoir at a plant flooding four square kilometers, directly affecting 7,000 people and forcing about 800 people to evacuate seven villages and towns. There have been further fears that the waste is leaking into the Danube River and spreading down stream.

Dr. Tamas Fabiny, who is involved with the cleanup of this disaster, said, “What happened is not an ecological catastrophe caused by unbridled powers of nature, but a catastrophe caused by negligence and exploitation stemming from human greed,”

At the same time China, along with Japan and Korea and the industrialized nations of the the West, is literally sucking the Middle East, West Africa and the Caribbean dry of oil and gas, not to mention the minerals and rare earths that are being mined wholesale everywhere throughout the world with little thought for the environment. At the same time the forests of the world are disappearing at an alarming rate, again with little or no thought for the environment. With the loss of phytoplankton due to warming oceans and the demise of the tropical rain forests, two of the main carbon dioxide sinks for reducing global warming, we face a runaway positive feedback effect which could cause tropical deserts to cover most of the tropics, along with the disappearance of the polar ice caps, posing a serious challenge to global civilization.

It would take someone in total denial, which it would appear includes most of the governments and politicians in the richest countries in the world, not to see what is happening in terms of record floods, rising sea levels, huge rain storms, record snow falls, smog filled skies — all as a result of greed and mistaken ‘utility’.

There is a saying popular in the ecological movement, “There is a sufficiency in the world for man’s need but not for man's greed.”



And all that I have referred to above mainly relates to economic and ecological loses and sickness.

People also suffer from other types of spiritual, moral and ethical illness such as corruption, lust, rapacity and a general lack of spirituality, etc. The present world system is subject to crash sooner or later, one way or another with disastrous consequences for all.

Now the time is for initiative and action but what action?.

Unfortunately the majority of people are reluctant to take any initiative or carry out any action which they perceive will limit in any way their present economic station from top to bottom except amongst perhaps the most desperate of peoples and even then.

Everywhere we can see that the people are in abject denial even when the climate scientists tell them that a rise of even 2° C. spells the end of what we now call life, and is likely in 20 to 30 years.

Additionally as the system begins to crash the people of the world will almost inevitably undergo much heavier afflictions: famine, world-wide wars, mass destructions by satanic powers (such as Dajjal and Sufyani¹) are not difficult to foresee in a near future.

When this begins to take place on a broad scale, and when people become further disillusioned with any type of “ism” (way of life, ideology, theology, religion), and when they begin to stretch out their hands for help, then people will begin to reach the point of readiness.

The reason I seek to draw your attention to all of this in this *bayān* on Sayidinā Nūh ﷺ is to try to make clear that essentially we are all living now in *his* time in *our* time.

And for the same reason, but from a different perspective, I also spoke earlier in what might have seemed to be an extraneous manner about Ahlul-Bayt, perhaps causing listeners/readers to wonder why I brought that up in a *bayān* on Sayidinā Nūh ﷺ.

Let me quote this ḥadīth again:

“My family among you are like the Ark of Nūh ﷺ. Who sails on it will be safe, but who holds back from it will perish.” (Aḥmad)

I believe that in this period of time which will see, as I said, world-wide change on both the ecological and economic fronts as well as, quite possibly, even heavier afflictions by the way of economic and territorial wars coupled, quite possibly, with the well known signs of the times or hour (°*alāmātu-s-sā‘ah*/علامات الساعة) featuring mass destructions by satanic powers. In these times those whose hands are stretched out for help and ready for that help must of necessity search out the way of getting on board the ship of safety (*saḥnātun-najā‘*/سفينة النجاء) and set sail with the People of the House to the same safety that Sayidina Nūh offered the people of his time.

1. The Sufyani (Arabic: السفيفاني), is an apocryphal character of Islamic eschatology. The Sufyani will emerge before the Mahdi from the depths of Damascus. The term “Sufyani” is a term referring to his descent from the progeny of Abu Sufyan. He will be one of many Muslim tyrants that the Mahdi will have to face in the Middle East. The Sufyani is not the Dajjal. The Ahadith regarding the Sufyani specify that he is a tyrant who will spread corruption and mischief on the earth before the Mahdi. He will be such a tyrant that he will kill the children and rip out the bellies of women. The Sufyani will murder those from the household of the Prophet and will rule over Syria. — *Look around. Does this footnote not seem timely?*

Let me make it clear that I here I am not speaking about any form of Shi'ism – or, indeed, any brand of Sunnism, such as Ahl-e-Sunnah wa Jamā°, for that matter.

What I *am* talking about is making haste to seek out, no matter how far or wherever you may have to go, those Members of the Family, or those of their *Nasab Ruhi*, who are captaining – in whatever temporary autonomous zone they might exist – ships of safety.

These, like the Ark of Nūh ﷺ, will be the only place where you can survive what is coming, and make no mistake it is coming.

Look for the captains, seek them out, do whatever research you may have to do but find them and go to them and stay with them, listen carefully to what they say, obey them and make ready your self.

For surely as danger and destruction are on the way so is al-Mahdi ﷺ.



The Coming of al-Mahdī ﷺ

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَنْ يَرْتَدَّ مِنْكُمْ عَنْ دِينِهِ فَسَوْفَ يَأْتِي اللَّهَ بِقَوْمٍ رَحُومٍ وَخُيُونَةٍ
أَدْلَتْ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَعْرَافَهُ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ بِجَاهِدٍ وَفِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا يَخَافُونَ لَوْمَةَ
لَا يُرِيدُ لَكَ فَضْلَ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ

yā ayyuha-l-ladhīna °āmanū mañy-yartadda miñkum °an dīnihi
fa-sawfa ya°ti-l-lāhu bi-qawmiñy-yuhibbuhum wa yuhibbūnahu
°adhillatin °ala-l-mu°minīna a°izzatin °ala-l-kāfirīna
yujāhidūna fī sabīli-l-lahi wa lā yakbāfūna lawmata lā°imin
dhalika faḍlu-l-lāhi yu°tihi mañy-yashā°u wa-l-lāhu wāsi°un °alīm

Oh you who believe! If you ever abandon your faith,

Allah will in time bring forth (instead of you)

– people whom he loves and who love Him –

humble towards the believers, strong towards all who deny truth:

[people] who strive hard in the cause of Allāh,

and do not fear to be censured by anyone who might censure them.

Such is the favor of Allāh, which He grants unto whom He wills.

And Allāh is infinite — all-knowing.

(Sūratu-l-Mā'idah 5:54)

It is sad to hear sometimes that some find in the story of al-Mahdi ﷺ an excuse and justification for inaction, taking the fatalistic view that we cannot, and even should not, do anything about the situation of greed and corruption until al-Mahdi ﷺ makes himself known.

On the contrary, the story of al-Mahdiؑ is one that encourages the believers to work for the unity of all Muslims and the peace and justice of ʾIslām, as the believer knows that one day the whole world will be enlightened by the light of ʾIslām and falsehood shall vanish.

A note of caution here; one must undertake this work at and in the hands of those who have license (ʾizaja) and permission (ʾidhn) to carry out this call. As Allāh ﷻ says,

وَدَاعِيَإِلَى اللَّهِ بِإِذْنِهِ وَسِرَاجًا مُنِيرًا

wa dāʿiyan ila-llāhi bi-ʾidhnihi wa sirājan munirā

and call to Allāh with *His Permission* as a lamp spreading light
(Sūratu-l-Aḥzab 33:46)

“Any ʾidhn is a blessing from The Divine. There is no true ṣūfī master without ʾidhn. It is the sole property of ṣūfī masters and is dispensed through them and by them only. There is no unlimited ʾidhn except by the knowledge of the Sole Owner thereof. By that I mean that it has been an extremely rare moment in history that two owners of unlimited ʾidhn have existed side by side without one of them having received it by the grace of the other. By definition, all ʾidhn other than unlimited ʾidhn is limited. This is not to imply a diminution of quality or sufficiency for the occasion. No, quite the contrary, ʾidhn is, by its very nature, more than sufficient for its owner and the people who drink from him (his community). It is possible for there to be more than one owner of unlimited ʾidhn in any age, but there will always be *one* source, recognized by the others as having a degree of superiority. From this view, unlimited ʾidhn is available to us all, but the reality is that we are only given what is needed, due to the limitations of our potential to carry more than that.” (ʿAlī Anṣarī in *Esoterics of the Sufi Way*)

So beware of acting on your own but, rather, be sure your hand is in the hand of the one whose hand is under the hand of the Source if you would be successful in this work. Further we advise that the heart of the caller be receptive to the hidden ʾimām who dwells within those whose hearts have been cleansed of the garbage and corruption of this world. This in accord with Ḥadīth Qudṣī,

لا بلدي ولا السماوات الأرض بلدي تحتوي على البيانات،
ولكن قلب المؤمن بلدي الحقيقي يحتوي على البيانات

“Neither My heavens nor My earth contain Me,
but the heart of My true believer contains Me”



Addendum

As usual I thought I had finished as twenty-four pages takes up just about an hour of talking, which is the usual program length for our Sunday talks and soḥbet but on the last page I mentioned, almost in passing, the hidden °imām and I thought that, if not the listener, then the reader should get a little more than a passing reference.

So.

First off I would like to make clear that in speaking or referencing the hidden °imām I am not talking here about al-Mahdi ﷺ himself which is why you will not notice the glyph ﷺ (peace be upon him) after the mention, though one could use it, but it might be considered out of place, ill-suited or just plain presumptuous.

Though in view of the Ḥadīth Qudsī I just mentioned it is really not presumptuous at all nor out of place.

What I am talking or, rather, writing about is the hidden °imām that dwells within the heart of the purified seeker of Truth.

The eleventh °imām ﷺ was asked, “How can a worshipper (°abd/slave/servant/عبد) not seeing his Lord worship the Lord?” He replied in writing, ‘My Master and my Lord; He whose benefits have honored my ancestors and myself, is too transcendent to be seen.’ I wrote in reply, And the Prophet ﷺ. Has he seen the Lord?” He replied, again in writing, “Allāh ﷻ – may He be glorified and exulted – has made visible to the *heart* of His Messenger what He wanted to show of His Majesty.”

And one of the Kḥawarij asked Abu Ja°far al-Bāqir ﷺ, “Oh Abu Ja°far what do you worship?” “[I worship] Allāh Most High.” And, “Have you seen Him?” “He cannot be seen with the eyes but hearts can see Him through the realities of fiath; Allāh cannot be known by analogy or apprehended by the senses or compared to humans. He is described by signs, recognised by indices [*alt*: indicators].”

This vision of the heart is presented not only as a possible, but necessary, constitution and one of the indispensable conditions of true °imān (faith). A scholar once asked °Alī ﷺ, “Oh prince of believers! Do you see the Lord when you devote your self to worship?” He ﷺ replied, “Beware! I would not worship a deity that I could not see.” The scholar replied, “How then do you see Him?” to which °Alī ﷺ replied, “Beware! The eyes cannot see Him with a glance; it is rather the hearts that see Him through the realities (*ḥaqqiqah*) of faith.”



Here I would urge the reader to acquaint his or her self with three books, *The Divine Guide in early Shi'ism* or *The Sources of Esotericism in 'Islam* and *The Sprituality of Shi'i Islam* both by M. A. Amir-Moezzi and specifically the Chapter III-3. Excursus: "Vision With the Heart" in the first mentioned and *A Contribution on the Typology of Encounters with the Hidden 'Imam* as well as *The Shaykhiyya Hermeneutics of the Occultation* in the second. Additionally I would direct the reader to the work of Henri Corbin and specifically to *The Man of Light in Iranian Sufism*.

I certainly do not propose to try to sum up what is contained in these volumes but I would say to anyone seeking to know more, or better, understand more about the question of the 'Hidden 'Imām' that they could do no better than to carefully read the above material.

The problem or question that all seekers face is the question of "authority". When the Prophet ﷺ was alive one could simply ask him a question and one would receive an answer that was unquestionably true. The problem that arose after his ﷺ death is, "where or to whom can a Muslim go to get an answer to one's question(s) that is unimpeachably and unquestionably true and correct?"

For a Sunni Muslim the best that they can do is to enquire from a *muttaqi 'alim* or *faqih* – a person who in essence you might say is, or qualifies (without being perjorative) as, a pious law clerk.

For a Shi'i Muslim – after the occultation of the last 'Imam, an event that occurred in 874, and given the time that elapsed to 943 and the withdrawal of his last deputy – now more than a thousand years ago – a sincere Shi'a is more or less in the same position as a sincere Sunni, in that they are left to find answers to their questions from learned and, hopefully, pious law clerks of one form or another.

In either case you must resort to those who are, after all, simply custodians of a literal-legal ex-post-facto prophetic dispensation largely codified some 300 years after the death of the Prophet ﷺ.

Interestingly enough both the Sunnis and Shi'ah are not unlike the Roman Catholics in claiming that their sources are inerrant or infallible (*ma'ṣūm*/معصوم) – in the first case based on the ḥadīth, "Surely Allāh will not make my Community agree on error, and the hand of Allāh is with the largest Congregation." Tirmidhī said: "And the meaning of "jama'a" according to the people of knowledge is: the people of jurisprudence, learning, and ḥadīth." Tirmidhī #2256, Cairo ed. *'Aridat al-ahwadhī* (11:9)

And in the case of the Shi°ah the belief is that all the twelve Imams ﷺ are infallible and inerrant and fully receive from Allah ﷻ what is related to the guidance of human beings, comprehend it perfectly, fulfill it properly and convey it to others.

But in the end Shi°ah are faced with the same problem as Sunnis in that the last °Imām has gone into occultation meaning he is not directly available to give guidance to the community (or are the Khulifah Rashidūn) and so, in the end, both communities must rely on pious law clerks for guidance and pious scholars are not inerrant and certainly are not thought to be either by Sunnis or by Shi°ah.

So where then can true guidance come from?

We, as People of Tasawwuf (تصوف) or (popularly) Šūfis, believe that our teachers (shayukḥ, pirs, murshids) are the proponents of a living and loving life-giving insight into prophecy rather than being custodians of a literal-legal ex-post facto prophecy. Moreover we both believe and see that it is through these insights, and the methodology that propels them, that people are guided to the Truth.

We also understand that there are various teachers who are the direct receptors of the teachings of the initiator of the school of *walaya*, °Alī ﷺ, who learned what he knew, as the gate to the city of knowledge, directly from the Prophet ﷺ and that this knowledge has been passed down generation after generation in a clear disciplined manner to documented and recorded teachers who faithfully transmit the true teachings of the Prophet ﷺ and his Inheritor ﷺ.

When we look to both the Way of the Sunnis and that of Shi°ah we see two systems that have literally reached dead ends and if that seems like a very harsh statement I ask you, as I have so many times before, to take a good look at what's going down – and if you want an example I give you the example of °Id al-Adha 1433 in Syria where erstwhile Shi°ah and Sunnis battled it out killing each other on a day which is supposed to be a day – °Id – of recurring happiness.



We Šūfis see visually how the system really works when we go into one of our zawāyiyas and we see on the wall the *silsilah* or document of transmission of our particular shaykh.

Starting with Allāh ﷻ and going to Jibril ﷺ and then the Prophet ﷺ and then °Alī ﷺ and then either al-Ḥasan ﷺ or al-Husayn ﷺ or Ḥasan al-Basri ﷺ and from those three into branches and sub branches and stems and twigs down to our own shaykh in the present.

We know what °Alī ﷺ was doing during those twenty three years when the Khulifah Rashidūn ﷺ were setting in place a government that devolved into a kingship and inevitably into the almost universal corrupt rule of thugs and gangsters across the Muslim world.

إِنِ الْمُلُوكَ إِذَا دَخَلُوا قَرْيَةً أَفْسَدُوهَا
وَجَعَلُوا أَعِزَّةَ أَهْلِهَا أَذِلَّةً وَكَذَلِكَ يَفْعَلُونَ

°inna-l-mulūka °idha dakhālū qaryatan °afsadūhā

wa ja°alū °a°izzata °ahlihā °adhillatānw-wa kadhalika yaf°alūn

When kings enter a country, they cause destruction and corruption, and abase the most noble ones. This is what they really do.

(Sūratu-l-Naml 27:32)

It was in those years that °Alī ﷺ, instead of concentrating on political rule founded our school which, until the present, is not at all concerned with ruling others but, rather, in learning and teaching how to rule our own selves and crucial to that is the purification of the heart for it is that heart of which Allāh ﷻ has said, “Nothing contains me but the heart of the believer.”

We care neither for the dynasties of blood lines nor the dynasties of politics, thuggery, corruption, machination and manipulation.

We believe that when you, through Grace and the application of the teachings, finally enter the heart that is purified there you will “see” both Allāh ﷻ and come under the direction of the true Guide, which is the °Imām ﷺ hidden in the heart that Allāh ﷻ alone rules.

This is the secret of all the true poor, sincere, and righteous teachers who have been blessed to be the true *warith* of the Rasūl ﷺ – the °ūli-l-°amr and the °ūli al-bāb – that Allāh ﷻ ordered us to obey.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ

yā °ayyuha-l-ladhīna °āāmanū

°atī°ū-l-laha wa °atī°ū-r-rasūla wa °ūli-l-°amri miñkum

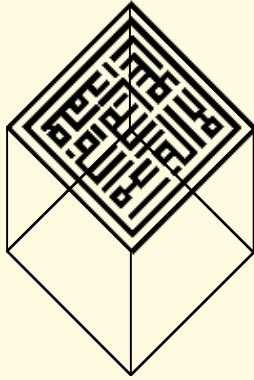
oh you who have come to belief, obey Allāh
and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you.

(Sūrat-u-Nisā° 4:59)

And it is those who have arrived at the pure heart, which in accord with His Words is the container of Allāh ﷻ and the seat of the leader who is not longer awaited because, in Truth, he is Arrived and dwells within us, who are truly those in Authority and Allāh ﷻ alone knows the Truth.

wa'llāhu °alim





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